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SUBJECT: FRONTEX: EU Border Control Cooperation at Frankfurt Airport

REF: STATE 26738

¶1. SUMMARY: In a February 19-March 9 joint operation, FRONTEX border security guards from seven EU countries are screening passengers at Frankfurt Airport to curb illegal entry to the EU. FRONTEX officials are pleased with the operation, which has netted fifteen detentions, mainly from South America. The operation may provide useful insights for DHS initiatives at European hub airports. END SUMMARY.

Ongoing Operation "Amazon II"

¶2. FRONTEX, the EU Border security cooperation agency, deployed twenty-nine experts from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain to eight European airports to reduce air travelers' misuse of visas and other travel documents for illegal entry to the European Union. The current operation -- Amazon II -- is a follow-on to a similar operation that took place in November 2006. According to a recent FRONTEX press release, airports in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Paris, and Rome are participating in this operation in addition to Frankfurt Airport.

DHS Frankfurt Observes Operation

¶3. Post's senior DHS representative spent a day at the Frankfurt airport observing FRONTEX operations, whose officers are pleased with their results. In particular, the Spanish customs and immigration officials were extremely useful in dealing with flights from Latin America. The FRONTEX border control officials wear their home country uniforms but can question and detain suspects under the supervision of host country (German) officials. The power to detain and question people considerably enhances FRONTEX's effectiveness in assisting German border control. Since February 19, the operation in Frankfurt has yielded fifteen detentions of improperly documented travelers, largely from Latin America, en route to destinations such as Spain and Portugal.

Comment

¶4. The FRONTEX Amazon II operation reflects FRONTEX concerns over the use of EU hub airports like Frankfurt for malafide travelers from countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. As the USG considers stationing DHS/Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Liaison Officers at Frankfurt Airport under the Immigration Advisory Program (IAP), the FRONTEX initiative could provide valuable insights.

¶5. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Berlin.

POWELL